



## Health Fair Keynote Speaker Targets Health Disparities, Behaviors, Attitudes

Not to overlook what members of racial and ethnic minorities can do themselves to break a pattern of disparities in illness and disease, keynote speaker Henry Foster, M.D. suggested remedies—some free—that anyone with determination can pursue to become healthier. Dr. Foster delivered his remarks in a keynote talk at the July 18 afternoon opening ceremonies preceding the ribbon cutting at the 2002 Black & Minority Health Fair. The Health Fair is part of the Indiana Black Expo Summer Celebration.

One of the remedies Dr. Foster suggested was to seek regular preventive screening examinations to detect things like heart disease and cancer—the kind of screenings provided free to Black & Minority Health Fair attendees.

Dr. Foster noted the presence of a



**BLACK & MINORITY HEALTH FAIR** participants cut the ribbon to open the Health Fair, July 18. They are (l. to r.) Martha Bonds, Health Fair director; Thakena Talley-Hogue, Clarion Health Network; Henry Foster, M.D., keynote speaker; Danielle Patterson, director, ISDH Office of Minority Health; and State Health Commissioner Greg Wilson, M.D.

large group of young people in the audience, who came to sing at the ceremonies. Dr. Foster urged adults to provide guidance to help youth

establish strong, healthy habit patterns to prevent overweight, obesity, and the diseases that accompany them.

Dr. Foster served as senior medical advisor to President Clinton on Teen Pregnancy Reduction and Youth Issues; is Professor Emeritus and former chair of the Gynecology and Obstetrics Department at Meharry Medical College, Nashville, TN; has produced more than 200 published abstracts, articles, video tapes, and chapters for books; and has been a senior advisor to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Dr. Foster said, "The CDC has shown that only 10 percent of premature morbidity can be prevented through direct health services. Half of the problems come from behavior—sedentary lifestyle, alcohol, substance abuse, violence, all those sorts of

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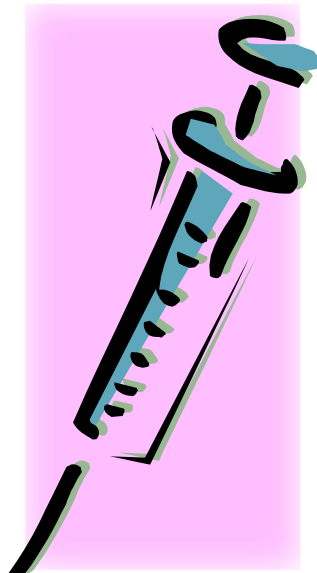
## State Health Officials Announce Exception to School Immunization Requirements

Because of the current shortage of several vaccines required for school entrance in Indiana, state health officials will allow schools to admit students this fall whose immunizations haven't been completed.

It is expected that all children will be fully immunized no later than January 31, 2003.

A statement sent by the Indiana State Department of Health to Indiana schools and local health departments says:

"Due to the massive shortages of MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) and DTaP (diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis) vaccines in the past six to nine months, the issue of requirements for school entry must be addressed.... The shortage of MMR and DTaP vaccines for this school year qualifies as 'extreme circumstances' as defined under IC 20-8.1-7-10.1."



Under this exception, a parent of a child who hasn't had all the required immunizations may obtain a form from the school or the local health department that includes a written statement and a time schedule for the completion of the remaining immunizations. The form is to be approved by a physician or the local health department to provide to the school.

The State Department of Health's Immunization Program is asking each school district to set up a system to track the children who haven't had all the required immunizations, so that when the vaccine shortage is resolved, these children will be recalled and brought into compliance.



# 2002 Black & Minority Health Fair Photos

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things—behavior that we can impact.”

“We’re talking about early diagnosis—PSAs (prostate specific antigen tests) pap smears, colonoscopies.”

Dr. Foster says cancer is not a fatal diagnosis. “The trick is, can you catch it early enough? And that’s where behavior becomes very important,” he added. He said “attitudinal barriers” keep minority populations from seeking out screening exams.

Referring to a quick and easy solution to reduce disparities, Dr. Foster said, “Everyone’s looking for a silver bullet, but there really isn’t one; I’d like one, too, but the closest thing to it is a regular pattern of exercise.”

He stated that exercise positively affects many of the body’s systems, like improving pulmonary and cardiac function, better immune system function, and raises natural endorphin levels, producing better sleep patterns, and less depression. “And, HDL—the good guy—rises,” he said.

Arthritis is not as bad, and in women, the loss of calcium from bones is slowed, he says. Dr. Foster added, “We now know that we can prevent the onset of a significant amount of adult type 2 diabetes with a regular exercise program, like 30 minutes a day, five days a week.

Dr. Foster thinks that both nutrition and exercise are important.

Although definitely not a booster of fast-foods, he implies total abstinence is not absolutely necessary.

“I’ve got two little grandchildren in California, and they get to eat fast food once a week. You can do anything in moderation,” Dr. Foster said.

— David Pilbrow



— All photos this issue by Daniel Axler



# Food Companies Vie With Nutritionists For Public Attitudes on Food Choices

People make food choices based on their attitudes about food. Public health nutritionists vie with \$33 billion in advertising spent annually by the food industry to influence public attitudes to purchase products the industry produces, according to author Marion Nestle, chair, Nutrition and Food Studies, New York University, and an editor of the 1988 Surgeon General's report on nutrition.

Judy Rose, ISDH Community Nutrition Program, is impressed by much of what Nestle has to say in her new book, *Food Politics* (University of California Press, 2002).



JUDY ROSE

Rose, through her work as director of ISDH's nutrition program, for many years has urged Hoosiers to pursue balanced food choices. She's a proponent of using the food pyramid as a guide to making daily food choices, with its emphasis on eating at least five servings of fresh fruits and vegetables every day, and also including whole grain products and whole foods like beans, legumes, and limited amounts of the fats found in nuts, avocados, fish, and olive oil that contain the omega 3,6, and 9 fatty acids that support production of the "good" (HDL) cholesterol needed by a healthy body.

"The sheer quantity of food people eat linked with insufficient exercise are major problems underlying obesity and account for many health problems associated with obesity in Indiana, like diabetes and heart disease," Rose said.

She added, "Obesity, by any measure, has increased by alarming proportions in recent years, especially among young people."

Rose said that if the nutritional advice to "eat less and move more" were followed by Hoosiers, there would not be the rising problem with overweight and obesity in Indiana, which for adults has risen to close to 60 percent of the population.

Against the recently intensified state educational effort to combat obesity is fast food and soft drink industry advertising, "whose imperative is to encourage people to eat more in order to generate sales and increase income," according to Nestle.

In her book, Nestle examines the influence the food industry has had in successfully reinterpreting the food pyramid and in manipulating American eating habits. Nestle shows how the industry has created conflicts of interest for nutritionists through financial support of research promoting the products the food companies manufacture, as well as

providing financial support for promotional articles for their products in publications of the organizations to which nutritionists belong.

A review of Nestle's book in the June 20, 2002 issue of the prestigious *New England Journal of Medicine* states, "*Food Politics* is about how the food industry influences what we eat and therefore influences our health. . . I encourage my colleagues in nutrition, food, and health to read this book . . . because I believe (Nestle) has captured issues that deserve debate . . . She challenges us to consider the political environment in which the science of food and nutrition exists."

## Congress Introduces Obesity Legislation

Judy Rose, ISDH Community Nutrition Program, reports that a bill titled IMPACT is perhaps the most comprehensive of approximately 16 bills introduced in Congress to address the national obesity crisis. The Bingaman-Dodd IMPACT bill was introduced in the U.S. Senate last week. "It is," Rose emphasizes, "an authorization bill, not an appropriations bill." (As seasoned observers know, activity can be authorized, but until the money flows, frequently little else transpires.)

The bill's language authorizes the following:

**Training Grants** for training primary care physicians and other health professionals on how to counsel patients and their families to accomplish the following: prevent obesity and being overweight; use nutrition and other strategies to increase physical activity, and change eating and exercise behaviors.

**Local Grants** to states, counties, cities, and tribes to promote community-based programs to encourage attention to nutrition and physical activity that prevent becoming overweight and obese. Funds might be used to create parks, bike paths, and activity centers; to create partnerships with businesses to promote employee work-place physical activity like walking or riding bicycles to work, and to engage in other physical activity during lunch, breaks, or performing normal work functions;

and to partner with schools to provide facilities for after-school and weekend activity.

**School Health Program** for students, incorporating health and nutritional awareness education and fostering increased physical activity.

**Institute of Medicine Study** to determine to what extent the food supplement programs of the Department of Agriculture contribute to obesity.

**Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality Study** to evaluate the safety and effectiveness of various weight reduction and control programs.

**Demonstration Projects** to assist Medicare-covered patients with nutrition and overweight therapy and local healthcare delivery systems with nutrition education and weight reduction programs.

**Research on Obesity** to compile summaries of all studies conducted by various federal government entities with recommendations for further research.

**Youth Media Campaign** to change children's health behaviors affecting nutrition and body weight.

Department of Agriculture establishment of a non-governmental **National Nutrition Foundation** to carry out research on USDA nutrition and food supplement programs, including research on readily available foods competing with school lunch programs.

# 800 Family Helpline More Important Than Ever for Pregnant Latino Women

Healthy pregnant women make healthy babies. That is why prenatal care is so important, and why almost 81 percent of all pregnant women in Indiana seek prenatal care in their first trimester, according to a February 2002 National Vital Statistics Report.

However, only 62 percent of Latino women in Indiana receive this care, declining from 65 percent the previous year.

The Indiana State Department of Health has been working to increase the availability of prenatal care to all women, especially to members of ethnic and racial minorities, through expansion of clinic services and WIC nutrition programs statewide. Support through the 800 Indiana Family Helpline has also been important for reaching and referring women to agencies and providers offering prenatal care.

Even though calls to the Helpline from Latino women were up 60 percent last year, the cases of many pregnant Latino

women present special problems.

Maureen McLean, Maternal and Child Health, offers compelling reasons for the discrepancy for which language barriers and recent immigration status may only partially account.

"The lack of insurance, existence of poverty, illegal status of some, long working hours that many Latino women experience, together with lack of knowledge regarding Indiana's resources, all contribute to the problem," McLean said. She added, "Some counties have limited resources for non-paying clients, also making finding assistance difficult."

What's to be done?

McLean said, "Nurses, other professionals, and family can obtain help by calling our **Indiana Family Helpline: 1-800-433-0746**, which is available Monday through Friday 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m."

"When the call is received, we will provide advocacy for the expectant women until we get them into care. We will also send them a Spanish-language "Baby First" video and educational packet to help them and their families learn how to prepare for having a healthy baby," McLean said.

To get the job done, McLean says that Rita Carlos, ISDH's Spanish-speaking communications expert, speaks to the callers about resources like WIC and/or makes a conference call with the client to a local physician to help each client receive care.

Mary Bisbecos, Helpline supervisor, said, "In addition to Rita's interpreting services, the Helpline has access to and has utilized the services of the AT&T Language Service Line for quite some time. This is a 24/7 service, and there are approximately 147 different language interpreters to assist their customers."



## West Nile Virus — How to Protect Yourself

Hoosiers can help prevent transmission of the West Nile virus by mosquitoes. Although many mosquitoes bite at dusk or at night, some bite during the day. All mosquitoes will bite if you enter an area where they are resting, such as high grass or heavy underbrush.

- When possible, avoid places and times when mosquitoes bite.
- Wear shoes, socks, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt when outdoors for long periods of time, or when mosquitoes are most active.
- Clothing should be light colored and made of tightly woven materials to keep mosquitoes away from the skin.
- Pant legs should be tucked into shoes or socks, and collars should be buttoned.

Use of mosquito repellants:

- Use an insect repellant with DEET (N,N-diethyl-m-toluamide).
- Read and follow instructions on the label of the repellant to avoid excessive use and over-application. In most circumstances, products with 25 percent to 35 percent DEET provide adequate protection for adults.
- Lower concentrations are used on children. Do not allow children to apply DEET repellent themselves, and do not use DEET on infants.
- Apply DEET repellent to clothes whenever possible. Apply sparingly to exposed skin, and only then if the label permits.

Homeowners should check their property and either overturn or cover containers like tires, buckets, and unused wading pools and clean out clogged roof gutters. They should also repair all malfunctioning septic systems that are discharging to the surface.



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